

**Interview with Lola Quintela
conducted by Linda Byrne for the
Providence District History Project Providence Perspective**

April 20, 2009

Linda: My name is Linda Byrne and today is April 20, 2009 and I am sitting in the offices of Supervisor Linda Smyth for an interview with Maria Delores Quintela for the Providence Perspective History Project. Good morning Lola, I believe you go by the nickname of Lola?

Lola: Good morning. Yes I do, that is my nickname in Spanish, all the women named Delores go by the nickname of Lola much like in English if you are William, you are Bill. So that is my nickname, that is what everybody knows and that is what I prefer.

Linda: What is your address, where do you live?

Lola: I live in Miller Heights neighborhood it is a lovely neighborhood with lots of trees and that is why we like it.

Linda: And that is in the Oakton area?

Lola: Yes, in the Oakton area and we have been there since 1993. We moved from Falls Church where we owned a small condo and we were looking for something a little bit larger. Our family was growing and our main concern back then was the good schools. So, I started searching the libraries with all the census information on the schools. Back then you did not have the Web site like we have now where you Google and everything shows up. So, I went into the library and did a search of the school performances.

Linda: What time frame are we talking about?

Lola: Early November 1993. We had been in South America in Bolivia for two years, where my husband was an advisor to the Bolivian President working on environmental affairs. Once that contract expired he was an employee of the

Nature Conservancy and was on loan to the Bolivian Government and once the contract expired we came back here to look for a house. My main concern was that I wanted a nice good little neighborhood school where the children would be able to participate in activities. Our Real Estate Agent said there is a real little jewel of a school brand new and called Waco Elementary so I started researching the census number as there really wasn't much on the Web Site back then. We liked what we saw and we visited many homes in Vienna then also and I just loved Vienna. It came down to two houses; one was in Oakton and one in Vienna. The house in Vienna had a pool and I did not want a pool with two babies in my house so we settled for the house in Oakton and we have been there ever since November 17, 1993. I remember.

It was different back then because all of the development along Oakton Road, when we moved was woods it was a horse farm up at the corner of Oakton Road and Miller Heights, and I would bring my children to pet the horses and look at how different it is now.

Linda: Now there is a school there.

Lola: Now there is a development there on Vee Lane and all those houses on Oakton Road, we saw them being built. It was a sad day when that wooded area was taken down because it was lovely, but that is development.

Linda: Let us go back to where you were born and grew up and how you met your husband.

Lola: I was born in a small town in the Province of Santa Cruz which is an oil hub in Bolivia. My father was an Engineer for the Bolivian Oil Company and back then in the early 1960's there was a big project to build a pipe line to sell oil to Argentina so my father was one of the Engineer's on that project and it moved from place to place. So, I was born in a tiny little town and when I was two years old my family moved to a larger city, it is the second largest city in the county, Santa Cruz (Spanish name) it is in the eastern part of Bolivia, sub-tropical climate, very warm and humid much like Miami. All year round there is lovely weather

and thunder storms and rain, very much like Miami weather wise and that is where I grew up. My mother was a stay at home mom, very involved with the school and PTA, the church and she was a citizen of Argentina so she was involved in the community there (Spanish name again) they did their social outreach and all that.

I attended a German school all my life. My grandfather was German, my mother's father, so my mother thought it would be a good idea if we all learned German so we all attended the German Private School and graduated high school there and spent pretty much all of my school years there except for two years that we spent in Argentina which my father never quite liked it and we went back. It was a wonderful childhood.

Linda: Do you have siblings?

Lola: I have an older sister and brother and younger sister. It was a wonderful childhood because there was an open field where we just went everywhere and it was very safe. My father was the Engineer in charge of developing this new neighborhood so there were houses being built and roads being built and bridges, we just had rein of that thing, and it was huge. We could ride our bikes everywhere we wanted and there was no concern of traffic or safety. It was as perfect as you could want, it was wild I remember when we moved to our house, there were monkeys that we could see and it was unbelievable. Of course it is completely transformed now. It was a closed knit community and people would just go visit their neighbors all the time and my mom never had any concerns or worries about our safety, it was wonderful. My mom stayed home with us.

Linda: That was the kind of neighborhood you were looking for here.

Lola: Yes exactly, but now that is becoming harder and harder to get no matter where you go. Even now back home in Bolivia where all my family still lives, they don't have that life style anymore, it is just harder to find. Now there are people living in apartments and the cities are more dangerous, there is more traffic and there are more concerns about safety and security and now not very many moms

stay at home because they have to work. But yes, in a way we want to have that but that life style but it is getting harder and harder to every year. I think I am extremely lucky and extremely fortunate and blessed to have been able to stay with my children when they were young. That was something I wanted and it happened, it was a sacrifice but I don't regret it.

Linda: You met your husband where?

Lola: Believe it or not we went to the same high school but I really didn't know him very well then. We sort of met again after he went back to Bolivia, after finishing his studies at the University of Minnesota. He went back to Bolivia to apply for a Fulbright Scholarship. He wanted to come back to the United States for a Master's Degree. When he went back to do the paperwork and to take the test and do the lengthy application process we met while that was in the pipeline so we met and four months later we married and came to the United States, not even a month after getting married. We settled in Chicago where he had a scholarship and we both went to school. That is what we did and that is all we had money for. So we just went to school, worked hard and studied, went home and did it all over again, even on Saturday's and Sunday's all we did was study.

It was the first time I had been in the United States and had never visited the United States before. I had been to Germany, Chile and Argentina but I had never in the United States.

Linda: One of the things that strikes me is that you don't have an accent.

Lola: Oh I do.

Linda: At what stage did you learn English?

Lola: Well, we started learning English in school. I went to a German school to which I learned German in Kindergarten and I believe English was introduced to us in the fifth or sixth grade, but we took much more German than English which was a secondary thing for us. There was a lot of attention to foreign language learning in general. There were French schools, German schools, British schools

and there was always the notion that if you wanted to do something as a professional, either become a doctor or a graduate student you had to learn French, English or German because all of the literature, books were in a foreign language. This is something that you grow up with that if you wanted to advance in your career, whatever your field was you had to speak a foreign language and it is something that I remember my father telling me.

My father went to school in Argentina as a young man at age 17, and told us that his parents dropped him off at the train station with a trunk full of possessions and waved goodbye and that was it, because the colleges were better in Argentina back then.

Then he said in his second year he was convinced that if he wanted to do anything more after getting his degree in Engineering, Graduate school or anything else he would have to learn to speak English or German. So, he basically taught himself English, my dad was self-taught.

I remember when the American Engineer's would come to visit his office, since they were building this pipe line and all of the construction work, many Engineer's would come and visit the oil companies and many were American companies back then and they would come to my house because my dad was one of the only English speaking Engineer's.

So, I grew up knowing all of these Engineer's from Texas and Oklahoma and all these big oil companies coming to my house speaking to my dad in English so we knew since we were babies that we had to learn another language. So it is something that everybody tries to do, whether it is German, French and now of course English.

So it is striking that here very few people speak two languages. Of course now more and more with immigrants and of course Koreans but native born Americans very few are fluent in two languages and that was something I always found striking.

So yes I had to start seriously studying English when I first came here with my husband, I was 22. Back then in Chicago there was a program called English for immigrants, and even though I wasn't really an immigrant I was the spouse of a student back then, I wasn't even a student myself. I was able to register at the open registration and we had classes every day, every day. And the teacher was a fabulous woman and very dedicated. It was a large class.

We had people from Poland, Italy, we had Koreans, Chinese, Mexicans and you name it. The teacher would divide us into small little groups and I remember to this day that my group there was an Italian speaker, a woman from Syria and myself because then we would have to speak English. There was no Mexican in my group, she made sure that there were all these different languages and cultures so people would be forced to speak English and she would give us projects.

We would have a lecture in the class, then exercises, computers and listening comprehension, and then she would say, "Okay your project for next week would be unique and you are to call the Chicago Board of Trade on the phone and you need to make arrangements and pretend you are bringing in a group of 15 visitors who want to schedule a tour of it".

We dreaded those assignments on the phone because speaking on the phone when you are learning a foreign language is the most difficult thing. You have no context, you have not seen that person's face, nor do you see where they are sitting so you have absolutely no context and you are just relying on your listening comprehension skills so we dreaded those projects. But, you know that is hard work and that is how we did it.

We would stay after hours at the college; it was a Community College much like NOVA where we had our classes and we stayed after hours. The classes were in the morning but we had access to the library and we had access to all the materials, films, videos whatever we needed to use and so we stayed and would

pretty much spend the day in the library, cafeteria, because that gave us the opportunity to practice our English. I figured if I went home what would I do, my husband and I didn't even have a television. So this was in September when I started taking the classes and in November I told my teacher I think I am going to take the test to see if the University of Illinois, where my husband was a student, to see if they think my English is good enough for me to become a full time student. She said absolutely, you have nothing to lose go for it.

I did and they said it would be good enough to register. But I would have to take all these English as a second language classes and they were noncredit classes and I would have to take a test, in English 101 or English 102 to get credit.

In the meantime I could sign up for two classes for credit but they were contingent of passing the other classes so I said I would take it and so I signed up for English as a second class at the University of Illinois which of course was targeted to getting your writing up to speed, more so than your speaking even though we had a lot of speaking and listening comprehension but more than anything it was getting your writing up to par. We had tons of writing, many persuasive essays and for many of us that was really the first time we had written a paragraph in English. That had to have a paper that had to have an introduction and the middle and we had no clue what we were doing.

So I did that and then I was deciding what class can I take that is going to be interesting and going to keep me engaged so I will be able to speak more and interact with and then I hit it. I decided to take Latin American Studies, because I know a lot about Latin America because I had traveled a lot. Sure enough I hit it right on the head. That was a very interesting class Latin American Studies and for a while I even considered taking a minor in Latin American studies but I said no because we knew we were going back to Bolivia.

So all along I thought I would get a major in English or linguistics so I can go back and teach. If I had known then, what I know now I would have had a double

major in Spanish or something. That is what I ended up doing; I majored in Linguistics with a minor in German. I figured that I had taken German for so many years that I loved the language back then and I didn't want to leave it after putting all this time and effort. So that is what I did. If I had to do it all over again, maybe I would have double majored again. I might still do it, get a Master's in Spanish now. Why not!

Linda: So then from Chicago how did you get here?

Lola: From Chicago, my husband went to Louisiana State University for a PHD in Ornithology and I had to transfer because I wasn't finished at LSU they did not have Linguistics as a minor so I had to transfer to the English Department where they had Linguistics as a concentration of the English Department which had creative writing, Linguistics and teaching English as a foreign language and something else. So most of my classes I was able to transfer and get credit for but still it was an adjustment so I lost a semester. Then somebody told my husband about this new program of Conservation in the Brazilian Rainforest that was looking for an expert and that he should apply because they needed someone who could speak Spanish and Portuguese, which my husband speaks because he is Brazilian, and that he needs to apply because this job was his for the taking and would be perfect for what he wanted to do. He did send in his application and he did get the job. That was here within the Nature Conservatory and back then they were in the District of Columbia. So we moved here in 1987, actually my husband started, I think it was in February of 1987 he never finished his PHD because we were running out of money so we came in February of 1987 and started working for the Nature Conservatory right away. I wasn't finish so I had to stay behind so when I graduated in 1987, I joined him here in D.C. It was the perfect job for him, it really was. I was very tired from school, I had worked through school, my father passed away, my mother passed away so I say, you know what, I am just going to get the one year extension afer I graduated. Back then Immigration would give you permission to work for a year after graduating if

you worked in something relating to your area of studies or expertise. I had taken some classes in teaching Spanish and second language acquisition so I figured that it is, let me take this and apply for this thing let me go and work for one year and I did. I taught Spanish in a school of languages and we worked with a lot of students from the State Department who were training to go to Mexico, Chile we trained quite a few Drug Enforcement Agents from the DEA at that time who were getting ready to go to Peru and Bolivia. These were intensive classes of six hours a day every day with small groups of two, three, four or five students and one on one many times because all of these students had to pass a proficiency test before they would be deployed. It was a lot of fun, very interesting and I met a lot of fabulous people and then I had my children and I quit work.

Linda: It sounds like both of you were extremely busy, what kinds of work did you do while you were in school?

Lola: I worked for the Spanish Department initially I had a work study of 15-18 hours a week. In the Spanish Department I did everything from Registration, to typing tests, to helping teachers, transcribing students, everything whatever they wanted me to do , I did because I was happy to have the job and then I had this bright idea. Back then there were word processors and computers and we are talking back in 1983 and 1984 and not everybody had computers, very few people did, we had these gigantic terminals in the building but the Professors did not know how to do the word processing, so I learned so I figured that this it is, it will give me a little extra money so I ended up writing a lot of the Professors papers that they had to submit for publications and magazines so I ended up doing a lot of that. I also learned how to do the Spanish characters and punctuation marks that we have in English and back then it was a program that you had to write and use to put the upside-down question mark so my husband helped me learn how to do that so I ended up doing a lot of the typing for the Professor's . Of course nowadays everybody has their own computers, but back then they didn't an it was wow. So I did that and then at LSU I worked at the International Student Office. It is a large University back then and we are talking 1985-1987 and we had a very large amount of students from Central America. At this time there was a

lot of turmoil in Central America with the Salvadoran Guerillas, an Nicaragua and everything so a lot of those children from wealth families who could afford to send their children abroad were coming to the States and many attending LSU, the climate and geographic proximity and all that. So they needed someone at the International Students Office to speak Spanish to help these students with their records and transcripts and everything so that is how I started translating without even thinking what I was doing. Because many of the records and paperwork that was coming was in Spanish, so I had taken a couple of classes in period of Translation in Spanish at the University of Illinois so I would have at least something to hang on to and I had always been interested in the theory of translation so that is where I got to put my experience with translation to use. The experience of helping students I did everything. I would help them when they came in to get settled, help them on campus, with shopping and to help them find their way. I guess it was my first experience in giving back because so many people had helped us when we came so I said now I will do the same for the ones that are coming after me.

Linda: So your experience was good coming here.

Lola: It was good. The people at the University of Illinois were fabulous and my husband was the only foreign student back then believe or not there was a large lab, Ecology was the area where he studied and there were students from New Jersey, Wisconsin, Washington State, you name it and my husband was the only foreign student. I remember when they welcomed him and the graduate student office said they were going to have a party to welcome the new incoming students and in honor of Carlos (my husband) they decided we were going to go to a Mexican restaurant. Off we went. I didn't know any of the food because it was very different. There was all this food and I had no idea what I was going to eat. I asked what a chimichanga was I had no idea what that was because it is not at all like the food we have back at home but all of the people were extremely nice. Everywhere we went we encountered wonderful people who were very generous and willing to help. Only once when I think we were looking for our second apartment in Chicago we saw an ad in the paper, it looked like it was close

to the campus we wanted and we went and spoke to the woman and we went to the Landlady and she said we don't rent to Latino's because the previous group destroyed my place so I am not going to rent to you so forget it. I said we are not going to wreck your place but she said that was it. We did not think like this and we did not want to make trouble so we just went to a different place and we wound up living in Oak Park of all places which was a lovely community and a lot of the professor's lived there. It was a wonderful experience. I really cannot think of ever being treated poorly and we have only received good things.

Linda: That is nice to hear. Now, in Fairfax County tell me about your work here, I know you have done a lot with language in helping others, talk about that.

Lola: When my children were young I did not work outside of the house at all because my husband traveled a lot on business so I found myself operating like a single mother when your children are young you are pulled in many directions. So I didn't really do much of anything except for doing things in the neighborhood, babysitting, PTA, Boy Scouts and that sort of thing. So it wasn't until both of my kids were in Elementary School that I had a little bit more free time and started volunteering at schools to interpret informally and in other organizations like Our Daily Bread where they have a Hot Line where people call if they need help with food and many of the calls they received were in Spanish. They were leaving messages on the voice box and people that worked there did not know how to help them so I would go in and transcribe and follow up. I would go and call and it was usually the Mom's asking for donations and it was for baskets for Thanksgiving and Christmas that we were trying to put together. We had to ask each person that called if they had any food allergies or special needs or anything like that and you know once you start helping you sort of can't stop in a way, don't you think? So then I started to gather my friends to adopt families which I did for a couple of years. Then I also translated for an organization that fixes houses for elderly people or for people with disabilities who can't do it themselves and again many of the requests were in Spanish and they had to fill out forms so I translated the forms and paperwork so they would be able to apply for this program.

Then I found the job which I have now with the Parent Institute which is a company here in Fairfax Station and they put together newsletters, fliers, brochures, to try and educate and empower parents to advocate for their children. They have newsletters in English and Spanish and they have a large circulation because they of their base. They send these newsletters not just in the United States, Texas, California, and New York, New Jersey but also in Puerto Rico and Central America so I am going to guess that there are a million and a half readers, but I am not sure.

Linda: The name of the organizations is?

Lola: The Parent Institute. They have newsletters targeted to pre-school age, Kindergarten, Middle School, High School and even some specialized for children with disabilities. They also have one that focuses entirely on teaching your children how to read and how to teach parents to become involved so they can become better advocates for their children. I think the Parents Institute is really filling a nice niche because back home in Latin America parents don't participate in their education. You go ahead you send your kids to school and then you pick them up. It is not expected for parents to go and volunteer. Sure you go and check and make sure they do their homework and you make sure they bring their books to school, but parents are not usually in school every day helping with trips or helping with presentations. The teachers sort of resent that because they think the parent is going to try and tell them how to do their job.

In the United States it is a totally 180 degree opposite where parents are expected to help and are encouraged to come so I think it is a labor of education where we are educating the parents and I love it because I think that anything that you can do for children is going to give back 20 fold.

Linda: How is the Parent Institute funded?

Lola: It is a Pro-Profit Organization; they sell their publications I think to the school districts, I believe Fairfax County has purchased some. I have seen some bullying behavior that we have produced, but yes they are sold by subscriptions

only and I believe the school district buys them and they can then reproduce them and give them to their schools. I think it is wonderful and a labor of love. So that is what I have been doing. I also have been translating for them and I have other clients and I also have some in the Environmental Sector through my husband's work.

Linda: Your husband is famous in his own right.

Lola: Well he was one of the pioneers when working for the environment when it wasn't at all what it is now. He likes his job, yes.

Linda: Tell me about your children.

Lola: I have two children, one boy and one girl. My son Carlos is 18 and is a Freshman at William and Mary studying Political Science and thinking about getting a double major in Political Science and Economics and is having a wonderful year so far and enjoying it very much. My daughter is a high school Junior at Thomas Jefferson thinking about pursuing a degree in biology, particularly neuro-biology which is what she enjoys taking classes in. She is also a classical ballet dancer with a local company here in Fairfax so she is a busy girl.

Linda: I was reading that your son has been involved with Governor Kaine's office and has been appointed to the VTSF, which is the Virginia Tobacco Settlement Foundation.

Lola: Yes the foundation has two teenage appointee's and they have to go to Richmond, VA for meetings. I believe they meet three times a year and they are basically focusing on preventing teenagers from smoking so I think the Board was very smart to include teenagers because they are brutally frank, you know that. They are honest and will tell you, you know this Ad ain't going to cut it; we are not going to like it so we are not going to listen to it. Again, I think the Board was very smart to include professionals from Health, Attorney's and also two teenagers. I don't know if he is going to have to resign now that he is going to be 20, I don't know how that works but he is still with the Board and he is also a member with the Young Democrats at William and Mary and he is very involved with the

political scene. He was down at the Gubernatorial Debate yesterday at William and Mary so he was front and center texting me updates.

Linda: Tell me a little about yourself, you have been very active in the Democratic Party.

Lola: I became a United States Citizen on August 17, 2000. We were legal residents of the United States and obtained our Green Card in the year 2000 and so we qualified by the year 2005 and could have become citizens then but we just never did it. Then what got me very upset was the Clinton Impeachment trial and I wanted to vote. So I studied and did the paperwork, sent my check and we became US citizens in August.

We took the children to the ceremony because we wanted them to see it. As a matter of a fact I involved my children through the whole process. I remember my son was a Cub Scout when I had to study so we made a lesson out of my studying the questions and all of the preparations we shared with the Cub Scouts which we thought was a good lesson in Civics, like what is the difference in being a permanent resident or a United States Citizen. And what I was able to do now was vote which to me was the most important thing.

We grew up under dictatorship all of our lives in Bolivia so my parents never had the opportunity to vote. As Bolivian Citizen living in Bolivia I never voted. My parents were politically involved and so were my in-laws so we both grew up with the notion of how horrible is it to want to do something, to want speak up and participate and say something and contribute and not being able to do that.

We also grew up under military curfew pretty much of all our childhood and adolescent years so when my children complain about their curfew, I tell them they have nothing, I grew up under military curfew where you could not be out past 10:00 pm because it wasn't your mom that was going to get you, it was the police that were going to get you.

So, I became a citizen in the year 2000 and got involved right away in the Democratic politics, and I volunteered translating and interpretation, I actually

think I went to Governor Warner's in 2001. I sent an email and said that if he was thinking of putting something in Spanish or if he needed help with voter registration drive or some sort of event where you would need a Spanish speaker to let me know because I would love to help. I thought sure; somebody is going to call me. But, the very next day this I had this woman was sending me all of these brochures that they wanted to have in Spanish, so I translated everything and sent it to her. I thought, right like they are actually going to print it, I doubt it. So then I go to my daughter's back to school night and low and behold what do I see? The brochure, I was so happy, so that is when I really started and again once you start it is hard to stop.

Then I did targeted outreach, voter registration that is the thing where I put my effort in so I have done a few of those. But I still continue to translate and interpret whenever somebody needs me I just put it out there.

Linda: Let's go back to your neighborhood of Miller Heights. It is quite a nice neighborhood in Oakton. Tell me about some of the causes they had to look at or fight for.

Lola: The first one I got involve in, I don't think we had been in the house for six months, I didn't know anybody and two things came up. The first was a petition for the sewer and I canvassed my two streets asking people if they would be in favor to sign a petition to prohibit, because we have septic tanks (all of Miller Heights have septic tanks and we don't have sewers) and the concern was if we approved the sewers they would change our density then we would have condos and apartments and all that, so that was the first. I did not know many of my neighbors, I would just knock on the doors and introduce myself because we had just moved in and had two babies and was pushing a stroller. So, I met a lot of neighborhood friends and activists and people that way. That was the first one then the second one was shortly after that it was about gas. Washington Gas company came in with gas service but we had to collect signatures and had to prove that at least half of the neighborhood would switch from electric to gas heating in order for them to extend free of charge to our houses so again we had

to canvas. Indeed many were in favor of this so we brought it in and that was the second neighborhood wide petition that I participated in and now I would say that at least 70% of the people have switched to gas.

Linda: So what I am seeing in Fairfax and Providence specifically that communities with Civic Associations or Homeowners Associations are able to advocate for themselves?

Lola: Yes, absolutely. All you need is one leader, one person who would find the news in the paper or read the article or become aware of a particular issue and then they would spearhead that issue and call a meeting and people are interested, people will come. We did that again for Miller Heights for speed bumps. That was an issue that had been talked about forever and it never quite got off the ground. My children were a little bit older and this was something that mom's of young elementary age students were more involved in because those kids were biking and had to wait for the school bus so they started this initiative and of course we all jumped on board and then it became a reality when we had that tragic accident in Miller Heights where a student was killed and I think that sort of crystallized the whole initiative and it got a final push and we got the speed tables.

Linda: How was that student killed?

Lola: This was in October in 2006 or 2007 and it was apparently a high speed accident that involved drinking and driving. There was a car parked on the side of the road and the driver lost control of the car and hit the parked car and the passenger died on the scene and the boy was a classmate of my son. They had been classmates at elementary school at Waples Mill. It was a shock for the neighborhood and that generated a lot of interest and we were able with the help of Steve Shannon (Delegate) and Linda Smyth (our Supervisor) to contact the appropriate authorities at Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) to complete the studies. It was a very lengthy process because again we had to canvas the neighborhood and there were about 430 something homes and we

had to have a certain number of those homeowners agreeing that speed was an issue in the neighborhood.

Then once the location, actually four spots were identified by VDOT where these bumps or tables could be installed, then we had to request permission. It was very long, but it is now a reality and we now have bumps or tables and stop signs which was the second part of the Proposal that VDOT came back with. And that was truly a community effort which took a long sustained effort to see it through and again it was initially we just did not know which door to knock. I don't think that VDOT was opposed it was just that we were knocking on the wrong door. Linda Smyth and Steve Shannon guided that effort and now we have our tables.

Now the next thing I keep hearing and is of course we don't have a President for our Association and this is another long cherished project to have a bike path to the library.

Linda: Oh wonderful, that would be the new Oakton Library.

Lola: Exactly. Wouldn't that be wonderful if we had a path so that the local children could bike to our local library? My children are too old now and drive, but I think that would be wonderful. But we are having issues.

Linda: With Right of Ways?

Lola: Yes, so maybe we will still have it. I mean the library was a dream at one point when we first moved in and now we have it and I love it.

Linda: What would you say to people who are moving to Fairfax County and specifically looking at Providence District as a place to live?

Lola: I would say do it because we have everything. We have fabulous schools, we have a library, we have parks. I cannot tell you how much I appreciate Oak Marr Recreation Center. That is the park where my kids learned how to swim, gymnastics classes, diving class and we had birthday parties and is fabulous. Nottoway Park, fabulous with all of the activities they have for children and I remember the Kindergarten popsicle party we had at Nottoway Park where all the

Kindergarten kids met and so when they got on the bus the first day of school so they knew everybody. It is truly a wonderful place to live.

Linda: Nottoway nights where they have concert series.

Lola: Yes and now we have the Farmers Market at Oak Marr and that is another huge gold star. I think it is a fabulous place to live and I would say come and participate in your community's life because it is by giving and having those networks expand that you truly feel a part of. I truly feel a part of the community, I really do and I think it is just by doing in whatever area of interest you have. Some people work through their churches or places of worship, whatever. I have chosen to give politically by becoming Precinct Captain and organizing my Precinct but I think there is room for all anything, your school anything. That is what makes our community what it is because everybody is different and we all pitch in and we all give through what we like and I think we are blessed to be able to give back in the area that speaks to us whatever that might be and I think that is what makes it so wonderful.

Linda: So you found working with County Government and easy helpful process?

Lola: Yes. I have found the county services great. We had an issue I remember in particular with an assessment when our house was listed with a fully finished basement, which we don't and I told them they have to come and see what it really is that we have and is that going to change the assessment because I did not want to pay more than I had to pay for something I did not have. It went very smoothly and was professional and prompt and I was amazed. Another thing that amazed me was we had to do something with our septic tank. I didn't even know what it was when we first bought the house and my husband said you figure it out I don't have time to do this and I didn't even know where to start, so I called the County and they said hold on a minute, give us your address and we will punch it in and send it to you. I said what? I could not believe it, they were going to send me the location of my septic tank, do you have a fax number, I said I do and they said okay we are faxing it right now. Sure enough, I was amazed. Now I have all

the information I needed, I think we were going to do something with the deck I forget but anyway, amazing.

Linda: What do you want to do in the future?

Lola: Now that my children are moving up and my daughter will be leaving for college next year, I think the house is too big for us now that the children will be gone so we will probably downsize, I don't need all this room to take care of and since my husband's work takes him overseas we will probably take an assignment overseas for two or three years. Perhaps rent the house here and live wherever for two or three years for a full cycle. That would be interesting and fun, and will probably go to a place I am not familiar at all with, not necessarily Latin America so I think that would be interesting because then my children would come and visit and that would enrich them if we go to some place like Kenya or something that would be wonderful. That would be something I would like to teach my children. They are aware that the United States is not the world just by the fact that we have family everywhere but we would be able to show them more of the world and I would like to do that. So I will probably continue to teach, you know I teach part time so I will continue to teach and translating, I have a couple of more years.

Linda: Well you are leading a very interesting, fascinating life.

Lola: Thank you.

Linda: I want to thank you very much for this interview.

Lola: Thank you very much Linda, my pleasure.

[Recording paused]

Lola: I worked briefly with Consumer Affairs which had a Sister Site in Spanish to educate consumers about dangerous products it was an idea that was so warm. Do you remember when we had that Peanut Butter, Salmonella, everybody eats Peanut Butter and the concern was that people who speak Spanish they may not be aware of this dangerous product and they may not know that if they buy it if

they may have to return it or not eat it. So I worked with and translated many of the consumer advisories and dangerous cribs and when the children were swallowing those magnets and those stories that were just so horrible. I just thought you could save a child's life if a parent was informed in their own language. This is a life and death issue, how many people died from that Salmonella scare. So I translated for the Consumers Affairs for the Sister Site and in Spanish but that project has been put on hold in this tough economic crisis and they had to fold the Sister Site but it still does exist in an English only site.

Linda: And it is sponsored by?

Lola: It exists by Ads but it also exists by electronic version so basically if not enough people are reading it in Spanish the Ads just don't have the funding to pay me and to sustain it but we will see it might eventually come back to life but I feel it fills an important niche, but in this tough economic times something has got to give.

Linda: Your son, tell me some more things that he is involved with.

Lola: He attended the Sorenson Institute for Political Leadership at the University of Virginia and received the Jefferson Award for Leadership and I thought, how interesting I think he was the only foreign student there, and he got the award a cup engraved with his name and it just brought me to tears.

I think that immigrants are the future in this country, just look at the numbers. We are raising this generation completely integrated and already giving back to the community, already participating. That is fabulous and I think that is what I would say to all the immigrants - I know at times it is difficult to become a part of something new, it is scary and unknown but we have only received welcoming arms and I think it has made me and my children better people. They will probably live here the rest of their lives and be 100 percent Americans and maybe at one time eventually they will totally forget they are Spanish, who knows?

Again, it is only by giving back that you can feel like that is your place, your home and that is where you belong. This is truly my home now; would I consider going

back to Bolivia? Who knows I may when we retire, I may spend part of my time there but this is really my home now I truly consider this my house so when we go back and visit family and sometimes spend in the summertime a month there I come back and I am landing at look at Dulles Airport when we are landing, I get excited.

Linda: Well I think that anybody that is as active as you are in your community has to be a part of it because you are community.

Lola: Thank you Linda.